

**2014 - 2016**

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**BIG HORN  
COUNTY STUDY  
COMMISSION**

**FINAL REPORT**

# **FINAL REPORT BIG HORN COUNTY STUDY COMMISSION**

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# **Certificate**

## **Establishing the Existing Plan of Government for**

# **BIG HORN COUNTY**

Due to not being able to locate the 2007 Study Commission's Certificate form of government that Big Horn County was functioning under at the time, the 2014-2016 Study Commission has used the Certificate from the 1995-1996 County Study Commission, which is below.

If retained by the voters, the government of Big Horn County shall be organized under the following provisions of MCA 7-3-111, which authorizes the elected county official form of government.

### **7-3-111. Statutory basis for elected county official government.**

(1) For the purpose of determining the statutory basis of existing units of local government after May 2, 1977, each unit of local government organized under the general statutes authorizing the elected county official form of government shall be governed by the following sections:

- (a) 7-3-401 Commission form.
- (b) 7-3-402. Nature of government.
- (c) 7-3-412(2). Selection of commission members.
- (d) 7-3-413(1). Type of election.
- (e) 7-3-414(1). Presiding officer of commission.
- (f) 7-3-415(2). Administrative assistants.
- (g) 7-3-416(2). Terms of commission members.
- (h) 7-3-417(2). Size of commission and community councils.
- (i) 7-3-418. Terms of elected officials.
- (j) 7-3-432(1). Legal officer, who may be called County Attorney
- (k) 7-3-433(1). Law enforcement officer, who may be called Sheriff
- (l) 7-3-434(1). Clerk and Recorder.

- (m) 7-3-435(1). Clerk of District Court.
- (n) 7-3-436(1). Treasurer.
- (o) 7-3-437(6). Surveyor. Included with Clerk and Recorder. Not included as a separate office.
- (p) 7-3-438(1). Superintendent of schools.
- (q) 7-3-439(6). Assessor. Included with Clerk and Recorder. Not included as a separate office
- (r) 7-3-440(1). Coroner.
- (s) 7-3-441(2). Public administrator, Clerk of District Court. Appointed by local government commission.
- (t) 7-2-442(6). Auditor. May not be included in this form as a separate office.

- (2) This for has terms of 4 years for all elected officials except commissioners who are elected to 6 year terms. The commission consists of three members.

Big Horn County currently functions under the following Certificate form of government.

The following sections below establish the following form of government, which shall be called the COMMISSION FORM:

7-3-401. COMMISSION FORM:

The commission form consists of an elected commission (which may also be called the council) and other elected officers as provided in this part. All legislative, executive, and administrative powers and duties of the local government not specifically reserved by law or ordinance to other elected officers shall reside in the commission. The commission shall appoint the heads of departments and other employees, except for those appointed by other elected officials. Cities and towns which adopt this form may distribute by ordinance the executive and administrative powers and duties into departments headed by individual commissioners.

7-3-402. NATURE OF GOVERNMENT:

Local governments that adopt this form shall have general government powers.

7-3-412(2). SELECTION OF COMMISSION MEMBERS:

The commission shall be elected by districts in which candidates must reside and which are apportioned by population.

7-3-413(2). TYPE OF ELECTION:

Local government elections shall be conducted on a nonpartisan basis.

7-3-414(1). PRESIDING OFFICER OF COMMISSION:

The presiding officer of the commission must be elected by the members of the commission from their own number for a term established by ordinance.

7-3-415(2). ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS:

The commission may appoint one or more administrative assistants to assist them in the supervision and operation of the local government.

7-3-416(2) TERMS OF COMMISSION MEMBERS:

Commission members shall be elected for overlapping terms of office.



7-3-417(2) SIZE OF COMMISSION AND COMMUNITY COUNCILS:

The size of the commission shall be three and community councils to advise commissioners may be authorized.

7-3-418. TERMS OF ELECTED OFFICIALS:

The term of office of elected officials may not exceed 4 years, except the term of office for commissioners in counties adopting the form authorized by Article XI, section 3(2), of the Montana constitution may not exceed 6 years. Terms of office shall be established when the form is adopted by the voters.

7-3-432(1) LEGAL OFFICER:

A legal officer, who may be called the county attorney, shall be elected.

7-3-433(1). LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER:

A law enforcement officer, who may be called the sheriff, shall be elected.

7-3-434(1). CLERK AND RECORDER:

A clerk and recorder, shall be elected.

7-3-435(1). CLERK OF DISTRICT COURT:

A clerk of district court shall be elected.

7-3-436(1). TREASURER:

A treasurer shall be elected.

7-3-437(6). SURVEYOR:

A surveyor shall not be included in this form as a separate office. Included with Clerk and Recorder.

7-3-438(1). SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS:

A superintendent of schools shall be elected.

20-3-201(4) The board of county commissioners may establish the office of county superintendent as a part-time office under the provisions of 20-3-213, and adjust the salary established in 7-4-2503 to make it commensurate with the reduction in hours. A part-time county superintendent shall perform all duties of that office that are required by law.

Big Horn County Superintendent of Schools went to part-time as of October 25, 1993, by resolution 93-56.

7-3-439(6). ASSESSOR:

An assessor shall not be included in this form as a separate office.

15-8-102. County to furnish office space -- allowable charge. The county commissioners of each county shall provide existing office space in the county courthouse or other county building for use by the department's staff, if space is reasonably available. A county may charge the department a rate that does not exceed the rental rate that the department of administration charges state agencies for space in state buildings. If space is not reasonably available in the courthouse or other county building, the department may contract for the procurement of suitable space. For purposes of this section, "county building" includes a city-county building or a building maintained by a consolidated government.

7-3-440(1). CORONER:

A coroner shall be elected.

7-3-441. PUBLIC ADMINISTRATOR:

A public administrator shall be appointed by the local government commission.


7-3-442. AUDITOR:


An auditor shall not be included in this form as a separate office.

We, the Study Commissioners of Big Horn County do hereby certify that this is the existing Plan of Government as established by Section 7-3-111 MCA.

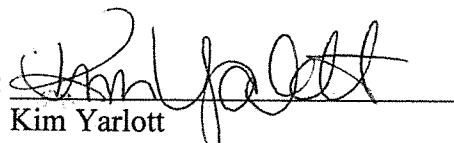
In testimony whereof, we set our hands.

Done at Hardin, Big Horn County, Montana  
this 22nd day of June, 2016.

  
John Doyle, Chairman

  
Mary Slattery, Member

ATTEST:

  
Kim Yarlott  
Clerk and Recorder  
Big Horn County, Montana

**STUDY COMMISSION BIG HORN COUNTY, HARDIN, MONTANA**

# Local Government Review:

At the November 2014 election voters in Big Horn County chose to study the form of County government. As set forth by the Montana Constitution, every ten years voters have a choice to review the existing form of local government.

Because no one filed to have their name placed on the November 2014 ballot, Big Horn County Commissioners selected three residents, John Doyle, Mary Slattery and Chip Watts, who later resigned, to the County Study Commission, to serve as members.

Training was provided to the Study Commission members by the Local Government Center at Montana State University.

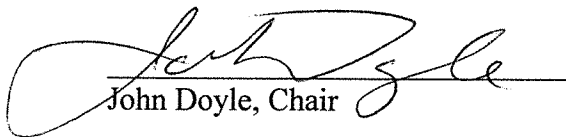
The Study Commission then met with the Elected Officials and other County Department Heads who expressed their concerns about responsibilities and the functions of their offices or departments, as well as other areas of concern.

The Study Commission gathered further information from the ten communities within the County by holding public meetings.

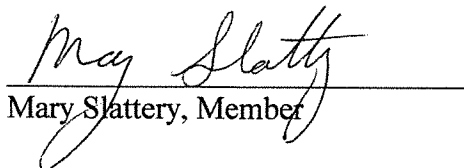
After a thorough review of public comments, as well as Elected Official and Department Head comments concerning the current form of County Government, the determination was made at this time by this Study Commission that **NO changes be made to the form of County government.**

The Big Horn County Study Commission is making the following recommendations to the Big Horn County Commissioners:

1. For the Commissioners to be more interactive with the residents of all the outlying communities in the County.  
Commissioner visibility within the outlying communities was raised at a number of the Study Commission's public meetings.
2. When major changes take place whether it be Commissioner generated or generated from an outside source, such as revenue losses due to the decrease in coal mining production and how that is going to impact services, perhaps an increase in taxes due to that loss, etc, that the County Commissioners publicize informational letters to the citizens in the County, hold public meetings, etc in the outlying communities to: inform, education, take suggestions, public input, etc.
3. To look for a feasible way to reinstate the solid waste program within the County.  
Many of the outlying communities, at the time of the public meetings, did not fully understand the full impact of the program's closure and they still do not.
4. For the County Commissioners to disseminate this report to County Departments and/or Elected Officials.

  
John Doyle, Chair

6-22-16  
Date

  
Mary Slattery, Member

6/22-16  
Date

# **Brief History of changes in Big Horn County Government**

Over the years not many changes have happened in Big Horn County's government and below is a brief synopsis of those changes.

The first study commission was elected by the voters at the November 5, 1974, election to study the form and power of government and existing procedures for delivery of local government services. The members placed the Commission-Manager form of government on the November 1976 ballot. This measure failed.

At the completion of the 1986 study commission review process, two recommendations were initially to be put before the voters in the County.

The first, "included a recommendation that the membership of the Board of County Commissioners be nominated from and elected solely by the residents of apportioned districts".

The decision in the case of Janine Windy Boy, et al, vs. Big Horn County, et al, civil action No. CV-83-225-BLG-ER by the United States District Court for the District of Montana had reached a similar conclusion, that in the future, County Commissioners will be nominated from and elected by the registered voters of apportioned districts.

These three districts are adjusted every 10 years and the last adjustment was in 2013.

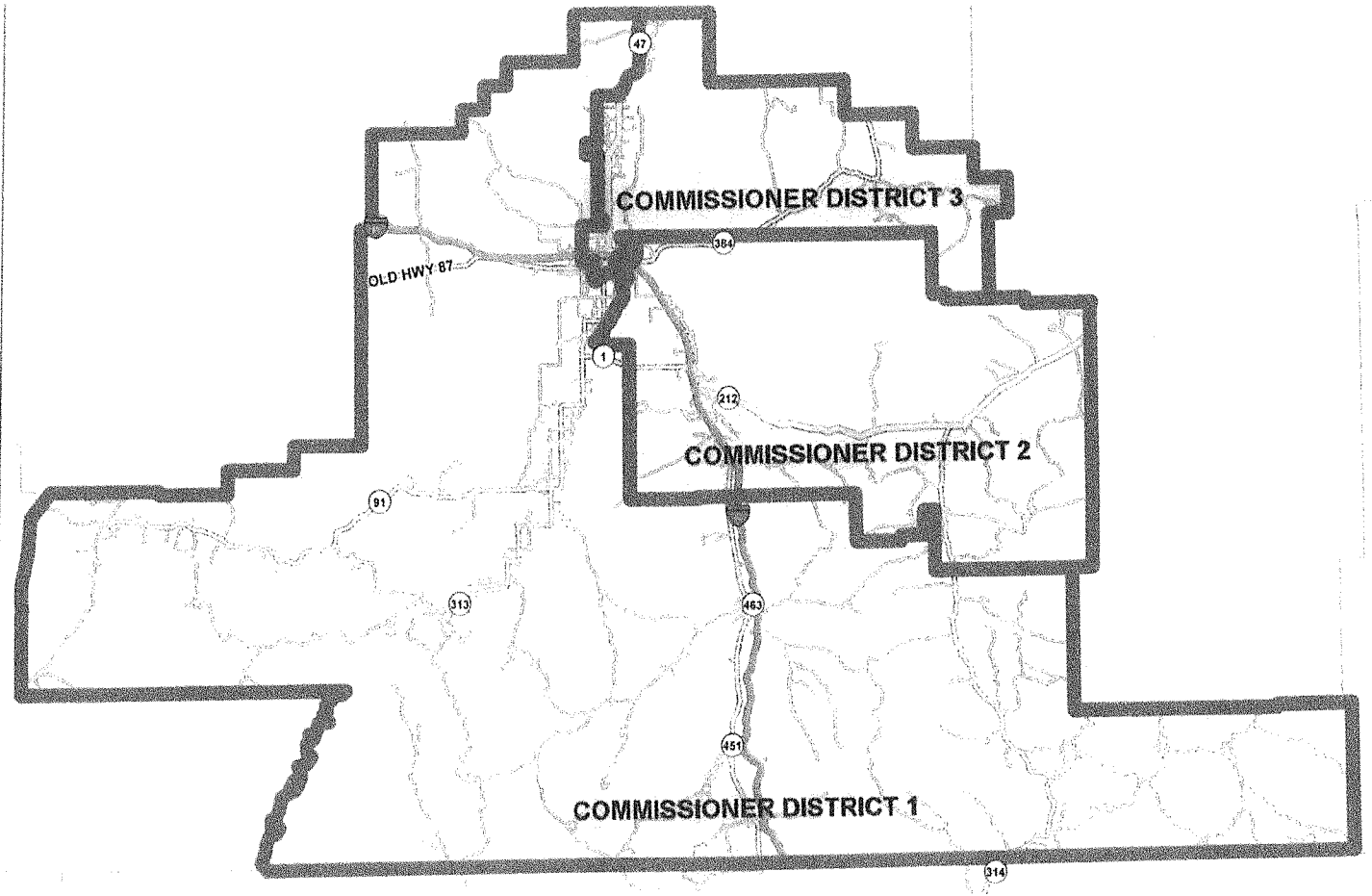
Today, the three districts encompassing the County are:

District #1, also known as the 'swing vote district' encompasses by far the largest land mass area of the County to include the areas of Pryor, Decker, Wyola, Lodge Grass, Fort Smith, St. Xavier and north along the Big Horn River to just a few miles South from Hardin, to West of Hardin and paralleling highway 47 North to the County line.

District #2: Encompasses the Busby area and South towards Kirby, Montana. The Crow Agency area, North Sarpy basin and North Tullock Creek areas and South towards Benteen and Reno Creek area.

District #3: Encompasses the town of Hardin, North paralleling highway 47 North to the County line and the Tullock Creek and Sarpy Creek areas to the East and North to the County lines.

See Big Horn County map below.



The second recommendation from the 1986 study commission was “that the election of County public officials should be conducted on a nonpartisan basis”. Upon further discussions the Study Commission withdrew the recommendation, stating that the general consensus is that the County is best served by the partisan system of elections. Therefore no changes were made to form of County Government.

The 1994-1996 Study Commission recommended changing the form of government with the addition of Community Councils and changing County elections for Elected Officials to a nonpartisan basis.

Only the nonpartisan ballot issue passed, once again changing the form of County Government.

The 2007 Study Commission “found tremendous voter apathy toward the process of Government Review” and recommended no change in the form of County Government.

The 2007 review, included a review along side the City of Hardin’s review commission, finding no changes to either County or City form of Government. The delivery of services, especially law enforcement, did however draw great interest.

The question of consolidation of law enforcement services first appeared on the November 2, 1976, ballot. This measure passed and could only be terminated by referendum approved by a majority of electors voting on the question. The measure basically states the County provides the service and the City of Hardin pays for the services. This ballot measure passed.

The 2007 Study Commission along with the City of Hardin’s Study Commission made a joint recommendation that the question of transferring law enforcement services for the City of Hardin back to the City of Hardin be placed on the ballot for voter consideration. This ballot measure failed.

The 2014-2016 Study Commission in its effort to give each community a voice in the form of County Government spent time traveling and conducting public meetings throughout the entire County. The Commission did not hear of any problems with the form of government, but attendees voiced concerns with the services being delivered or lack of delivery, which will be discussed further below.

**This Study Commission is recommending NO change to the form of County Government.**



The Study Commission did acknowledge that clarification needs to be made about how the offices of Department of Revenue (formerly called Assessor) and Superintendent of Schools and Justice of Peace function as part of the County's form of government.

Previously the Assessor's office functioned under the name of 'Assessor' and was an elected official.

This office now functions under the name 'Department of Revenue'. With the change in State law and how the Department of Revenue functions state wide, this elected official was eliminated. However, per state law 15-8-102, "Big Horn County is to furnish office space -- allowable charge. The County Commissioners shall provide existing office space in the County Courthouse or other County building for use by the Department's staff, if space is reasonably available.

A County may charge the department a rate that does not exceed the rental rate that the Department of Administration charges state agencies for space in state buildings. If space is not reasonably available in the courthouse or other county building, the Department may contract for the procurement of suitable space."

As per State Law 20-3-201(4). The Board of County Commissioners may establish the Office of County Superintendent as a part-time office under the provisions of 20-3-213, and adjust the salary established in 7-4-2503 to make it commensurate with the reduction in hours. A part-time County Superintendent shall perform all duties of that office that are required by law.

On October 25, 1993, by Big Horn County Resolution 93-56, the Big Horn County Superintendent of Schools elected official went to a part-time position.

Also further clarifying the Justice of Peace elected official, this position is established under the Constitution of Montana, Article VII, Judiciary. Each County shall have the following according to:

Section 5. JUSTICE OF THE PEACE.

(1) There shall be elected in each county at least one justice of the peace with qualifications, training, and monthly compensation provided by law. There shall be provided such facilities that they may perform their duties in dignified surroundings.

As mentioned above the services delivered or the lack of delivery of some of the County's services garnered the most concern by the residents attending the open public meetings held throughout the County by the Study Commission in 2016 and below is a summary of the Departmental, Elected Official and community concerns/issues.

## **SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT AMBULANCE SERVICES**

### **DEPARTMENTAL CONCERNS/ISSUES:**

The following is a summary of the discussions with the various Department Heads and Elected Officials and reflect their individual views.

- \* Department makes money
  - \* Since 2002, has operated in the black, having operated out of coal funds
    - \* Has asked for a reserve fund to sue as a carryover from year to year
    - \* Never done
  - \* Call volumes increased 50% over a 5 year period
  - \* No mills generated or designated for EMS
  - \* Ambulance vehicles
  - \* Replaces 1 ambulance every 5 years
    - \* Need to park units inside
  - \* 3 units/crews run every day, Hardin, Lodge Grass, and Crow Agency
  - \* No IHS ambulance, no contract
  - \* Tribe pays IHS bill
    - \* Standby services \$75.00 per hour (i.e. Crow Fair)
- \* Need to consider alternatives because they will start to be in the red rates, expenses, etc.
- \*
  1. Reserve fund
  2. Become a separate entity
  3. \_\_\_\_\_
- \* 80 to 85% of expense is payroll
  - \* Paramedics - 3 years minimum training required
    - 15.00 per hour
    - Compare to Sheriff at \$20 plus per hour
- \* Training expense and location becoming an issue
- \* Their office does all the billing
  - \* Medicare, Medicaid, Tribe, etc.
  - \* Montana CHIP insurance does not pay for ambulance

- \* Detention Center contracted with Big Horn Valley Clinic
- \* Calls are down because of this

## **AMBULANCE SERVICE COMMUNITY CONCERNS/ISSUES**

The following is a summary of public comments from the public meetings held throughout the County and may not accurately reflect the law or the facts.

Concerns expressed were that personnel needed to know the outlying areas of the County better and who lives where. The length of time it takes for an ambulance to arrive and the lack of any medical help were also concerns. This directly correlates back to the Rural Addressing issues above.

Those in attendance at the Hardin public meeting complimented the prompt service, that the ambulance staff is a good bunch of people and that they do an awesome job.

### **PRYOR**

- \* Ambulance services for the area.
  - \* Many of the participants brought this area of main concern up throughout the meeting.
  - \* Length it takes to get an ambulance there.
  - \* Lack of any type of medical help.
  - \* It should also be known that after the meeting had concluded one of the attendees mentioned that a couple with EMS training was going to be moving back to Pryor to live.

### **DECKER**

- \* Community gets good ambulance service from Sheridan, WY.

### **SARPY AREA**

- \* Concern that more County personnel need to know the Sarpy area for emergencies and fire, and who lives where, not just the Sheriff and Rick Kruger.

### **HARDIN**

- \* They do an awesome job.
- \* Prompt response.
- \* A good bunch of people.

## **SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT COUNTY ATTORNEY**

### **DEPARTMENTAL CONCERNS/ISSUES:**

The following is a summary of the discussions with the various Department Heads and Elected Officials and reflect their individual views.

- \* Constructive dialogue
  - \* Gain more experience, in better situation to share attorney office
  - \* Website
- \* Local issues
  - \* Apathy, small group of interested people. Government needs to lead and bring issues to the public. Invigorate public.
- \* His job is easier if laws he needs to enforced are good laws

Question      \*      Where do we go with info and how do we bring about constructive change?

Answer          \*      Make commissioner aware, find protocol

Question      \*      Commissioners use to meet with attorney regularly. Does that still happen? In a timely manner? Department head meetings?

Answer          \*      Does not know even how often they meet and commissioners business.  
\*      Little public notice

Question      \*      County government should be able to provide quick, knowledgeable answers

\*      How to use our \_\_\_\_\_ resources efficiently. County is much more efficient.

Answer          \*      Would like to take mre about balancing budget with efficiency.

Question      \*      Would it help if commissioners were more visible?

Answer          \*      No  
\*      Appearance by commissioners to tribe

Different chairs had different approaches to county government

Major issue, how do county actions affect a taxpayer?

## **COUNTY ATTORNEY COMMUNITY CONCERNS/ISSUES**

The following is a summary of public comments from the public meetings held throughout the County and may not accurately reflect the law or the facts.

### **HARDIN**

County Attorney:

- \* Needs to be out in the County more
- \* Why is County attorney not handling County commissioners work, why do they It was noted that the County Attorney needs to be out in the County more.

**SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT  
BIG HORN COUNTY  
TREASURER**

The Treasurer's Office is the collection and distribution center for all taxes in Big Horn County. While the vast majority of taxes are paid on or before the due date, a substantial effort is made to collect taxes which go delinquent.

The office handles collection of miscellaneous business and gambling licenses. It also receipts all the non-tax revenue by the County.

Disbursements of cash to cover County obligations is also the responsibility of this office. These disbursements may be to cover bills paid by County warrant, or to cover bond payments or remittances to other government agencies for which the County collects taxes.

It is in the public's best interest to have any cash invested. That investment responsibility rests in the Treasurer's Office. The present investment program is a good one, but it is constantly being reviewed and improved.

Record-keeping and reporting are also important functions of the office. Tax and license payment records are maintained as well as disbursement records. Additionally, the office is required to keep detailed records of school budgets. Reports from this office go to the State, the City of Hardin, schools, irrigation & various districts, and to the County Commissioners.

A brief overview comments expressed were that the staff in the Treasurer's Office could change how they were asking the public renewing vehicle licenses, if they wanted to add the Park Fee to their total dollar amount. Instead of stating, "You don't want the Park Fee do you"? They should be asking, "Do you want the Park Fee"?

An explanation of a tax lien and deed sale needs to be further explained along with the process of each. There needs to be better public notification and more information on their effects (tax liens and deed sales) in each community.

## **DEPARTMENTAL CONCERNS/ISSUES:**

The following is a summary of the discussions with the various Department Heads and Elected Officials and reflect their individual views.

- \* Office and staff are working swell
- \* The current Treasurer is not planning on running for another term.
- \* Current Treasurer had the following suggestions:
  - \* Elected officials need to know what it is that their offices do/handle.
  - \* Need to have an application process for qualifications.
  - \* Failure to follow rules
  - \* Current Treasurer had to call the past treasurers for guidance on issues that came up that was not covered in the training or in the handbook.
    - \* She has suggested to a couple of her office staff that they should consider running for Treasurer in the next election.
- \* Other elected officials not at their offices and/or not having enough staff, and her staff having to help work on various projects from those other offices, taking away from her staff's duties.
- \* Her offices biggest challenge is the tax assignments coming from tax sales.
  - \* Having to make sure that her staff is aware and to make sure the assignees are following the rules and having clarity that the process if followed as it is a complicated process.

## **COUNTY TREASURER COMMUNITY CONCERNS/ISSUES**

The following is a summary of public comments from the public meetings held throughout the County and may not accurately reflect the law or the facts.

## **DECKER**

Economic development.

- \* Tongue River Reservoir management is working on making the Park a Destination Park.
- \* Connecting Trails to Park program (i.e. bike trails connecting either park-to-park or trail or historical sites/developed within the park itself.
- \* Management has seen an increase in visitors to the park and is working on trying to incorporate more visitors to the area through the Destination Park program, incorporating Rosebud Battlefield through the Trails to Park program.

- \* Concerned about the condition of the County Road fronting the Park.
- \* Concern about County Treasurer staff not asking correctly about the Park Fee when vehicle licenses are renewed.
  - \* They are stating, “You **don’t** want the Park Fee do you”?
    - \* Should be asking, “**Do you** want the Park Fee” and let the client decide for themselves.
  - \* Those fees (or a portion) then are rerouted back to the Montana Park system for operational use.

## WYOLA

- \* Tax lien/deed sales.
  - \* Problem of not fully understanding the process.
  - \* Differences between the 2 (above).
  - \* Better public notification.
    - \* Needs to be more in each community.
  - \* Afraid of what is going to happen to community as an out of state entity bought lots of property in the community of Wyola.



## **SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT COUNTY STOCKYARD, FAIRGROUNDS**

### **COUNTY STOCKYARD, FAIRGROUNDS COMMUNITY CONCERNS/ISSUES**

The following is a summary of public comments from the public meetings held throughout the County and may not accurately reflect the law or the facts.

The new facilities at the fairgrounds were liked, however, wondered why air conditioning was not included in the remodel of the grandstand and would like to see that addition.

A question arose as to when and why the scale use fee per head that crosses the scale is not being charged? It was reported that at other area scales there is a per head fee ranging from a few cents up to \$1 per head. Evidently there was a scale fee per head charged in the past.

A community truck scale would be a nice addition to the facilities.

### **SARPY AREA**

- \* Fairgrounds
  - \* Would like air conditioning under the grandstand
  - \* Liked the facilities.
- \* Stockyards
  - \* Would like to see a community truck scale
  - \* Wondered about the use fee for livestock crossing the scale.
  - \* Other area scales charge a fee ranging from a few cents all the way up to a dollar per head.

### **OTHER DEPARTMENTAL'S CONCERN/ISSUES PERTAINING TO FAIRGROUNDS:**

- \* Very generous with the new facilities for the fairgrounds.
  - \* There needs to be a larger meeting room/rooms at the fairgrounds to accommodate multiple events etc. for usage.

- \* Concerns and problems with Extension Office handling the taking of reservations for the fairgrounds.
  - \* Stated the Extension Office has been directed by Commissioners to continue with reservation handling for the fairgrounds.
    - \* If there is a problem in reserving the fairgrounds then the Extension staff is caught in the middle between client and fair board.
  - \* Suggested that at least a part-time manager be hired to handle this aspect and that way that person can also try to bring in more events, etc. to the fairgrounds.
    - \* Acknowledges funding is probably going to be a problem.
      - \* If a manager could be hired events such as horse shows, car rallies, and evening shows could be a possible way to draw more people.
- \* Kitchen now meets sanitation rules.
  - \* Has more electrical outlets, counter space, has the necessary sinks for food prep and hand washing.
  - \* Poorly laid out kitchen.
    - \* Needing to watch out by the beam so you don't bang your head.
- \* On County's web page the fairgrounds is listed on the Extension link/page.

## **SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT DISASTER EMERGENCY SERVICES, 9-1-1 and RURAL ADDRESSING**

The Department Head, in addition to the above services, is the County Safety Officer, airport manager and chairs the LEPC committee. Of note this Department works closely with the Public Health and Environmental Health planning for emergence services.

A quick overview of the 911 and rural addressing functions.

Enhanced 9-1-1 service automatically displays a caller's location on a computer screen at a call answering center.

Also displayed is the caller's telephone number, which can automatically be redialed if the line is disconnected. Therefore, if the caller is unable to speak, or unable to provide location information, he or she can still be located with a map.

Benefits of enhanced 9-1-1 service, each telephone number must be linked to a physical address, so that any 9-1-1 caller can be located by emergency service providers. In addition to providing the location for emergency responders, the physical address of the telephone will also determine how the 9-1-1 call is routed.

Creating physical addresses requires naming all roads, including private roads, with unique names and assigning numbers consistently to all properties.

Once the road names and property numbers are assigned the new physical addresses can be used for 9-1-1 service, for mail delivery (once Postal Service operational changes are complete), and by utilities, delivery services, and others.

Creating physical addresses is not mandated by the Enhanced 9-1-1 system, but it is a responsible act of local government. By assigning physical addresses, a community allows its residents to take full advantage of Enhanced 9-1-1 service.

### **DEPARTMENTAL CONCERNS/ISSUES:**

The following is a summary of the discussions with the various Department Heads and Elected Officials and reflect their individual views.

#### **9-1-1**

- \* Calls update work, hardware update
- \* Services being delivered
  - \* County residents misunderstand ownership, maintenance
- \* Management
  - \* Folks call commissioners instead of Roads
  - \* Commissioners get caught in the middle

## DES

- \* Mapping, 9-1-1, radios
  - \* Lots of jurisdictions
  - \* Respond and deal with it and figure out jurisdiction later
- \* Train traffic and speed
  - \* Bakken fuels are more volatile. Rail carries most, pipeline is safer.
  - \* Contingency plans developed for larger spills etc.
- \* Public notices of hazard
  - \* Sirens
    - \* What they mean
  - Does each community have one?

## WEATHER

- \* Notifications
- \* Shelter in place
- \* Power outages
- \* NOAH notices

## FIRE SEASON

## AIRPORT

- \* Old one closed, new one open
- \* Cost of 7 million
  - \* County cost was \$700,000, some of that was offset with grants
- \* Buffer purchased? No.
- \* Old airport property to Fair Board
- \* New airport could be lengthened
  - \* Rated for certain landing speeds
- \* Hanger use
  - \* Owner \_\_\_\_ / lease
- \* Coming and going
  - \* Gate with a code
- \* Lighting, \_\_\_\_ runway
- \* Management board
  - \* Community members and area pilots
  - \* \_\_\_\_ practice training

Changes within government? Manager etc.

- \* Keep it the way it is.
  - \* Cross training to plan ahead for replacements.

## **DISASTER EMERGENCY SERVICES, 9-1-1 and RURAL ADDRESSING COMMUNITY CONCERNS/ISSUES**

The following is a summary of public comments from the public meetings held throughout the County and may not accurately reflect the law or the facts.

Those community residents that expressed concerns with this County service stated problems for law, fire and ambulance not being able to find anyone because of inadequate addressing.

Not only was there a safety issue raised but also personal issues with residents having problems in getting insurance and/or doing any kind of business such as banking because they lacked a physical address and/or a recognized mailing address and the lack of house numbers making mail delivery services problematic. In Pryor especially, they wondered who had named the streets, as the names made no sense to the residents.

An additional concern in Pryor, was that the lack of correct addressing made problems for elections, and those residents felt like their community was not a priority of the County.

As a side note, there are times that a correct physical address is not being recognized by other entities and GPS coordinates do not match up, which could possibly be a safety problem.

It was also reported that it does help to have this and it is easy to obtain your rural address.

Recommendations were that perhaps some kind of outreach program could be started, so the residents could get their rural address.

A recommendation for cell tower location on Deer Creek Divide that might provide better coverage in the Decker area.

### **DECKER**

911

- \* When 911 is called, the call goes into Hardin and Hardin dispatches back to Sheridan, which seems to be working okay.
- \* Ideal place for a cell tower is on Deer Creek

Rural Addressing

- \* Road signs, down and/or missing. Those in attendance well aware that the road signs are not a priority, but some of the times the traveling public gets lost with the signs being down.

### **FORT SMITH**

Rural addressing

- \* Physical addressing not being recognized by other entities.
- \* GPS coordinates not matching up.

## **PRYOR**

### Rural Addressing and 911

- \* 911 and physical address
- \* Problems for law, fire and ambulance not being able to find anyone because of lack of adequate addressing.
  - \* Perhaps some kind of outreach program could be started.
- \* Problems for community members doing any kind of business by them not having a physical address or a recognized mailing address, Street/house number, etc.
- \* Problems with banking, getting insurance, etc. because of inadequate addressing.
- \* Naming of the streets in Pryor, basically, 'who did it'.
- \* The names of the streets make no sense and something needs to be done about it.
- \* Lack of house numbers within the town of Pryor.
- \* Makes for mail delivery services, either post office, UPS or FedEx problematic.
- \* Lack of correct addressing made problems for election. This area concern basically returned the discussion back to the fact that the community members in attendance felt like their community was not a priority of the County.
- \* Signage, lack of.
- \* Entering Pryor
- \* Entering Big Horn County, Crow Reservation.

## **SARPY AREA**

### Rural addressing

- \* Does help to have this.
- \* No problems so far

## **HARDIN**

### Disaster Services:

- \* What does Ed Auker do?

## **SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT ELECTIONS**

### **DEPARTMENTAL CONCERNS/ISSUES:**

The following is a summary of the discussions with the various Department Heads and Elected Officials and reflect their individual views.

This department was split from the Clerk & Recorder's office for better efficiency and the much needed space. The Elections Administrator, shortly afterwards was met with a back log of work, getting registrations completed, meeting State Election deadlines, and getting the office set up and files in order.

The sharing of staff with the Clerk & Recorder was problematic and is much better with regular assistance from Superintendent of Schools' staff.

Another issue that came to light was the 'chain of command' for this administrator, and if legal questions came up, to whom does the administrator go to for answers, County Attorney or the commissioners legal counsel. Along those same lines was the wait response time for answers.

Election training was an issue.

Mail ballot issues

Election equipment costs, \$115,000 voting machine.

The new elections process within the County has presented obstacles for this department and staff such as:

- \* Satellite offices.
- \* Logistics were hard.
  - \* Had to take all precincts ballots to Crow because they had to be in order.  
Next time should be better.
- \* Courts did not address it
- \* Protestors want an office in Busby, Crow, etc.
- \* Costs have to be considered
- \* Issue with help during elections

And then there was this, a threat to not testify and told she works for 'them' and not Big Horn County.

- \* IT issues
  - \* New website, cameras, doors, email, phone.
  - \* It should be noted that the County's web page is managed by this department.

Other areas brought up were:

- \* As employee, value on education, no
- \* Not paid on par across State.
- \* Asked to be equalized with other Election Officers
  - \* No, creates discontent.
- \* HR training, yes
- \* Monthly department head meetings, no.

## **ELECTIONS**

### **COMMUNITY CONCERNS/ISSUES**

The following is a summary of public comments from the public meetings held throughout the County and may not accurately reflect the law or the facts.

#### **PRYOR**

Lack of correct addressing made problems for election. This area concern basically returned the discussion back to the fact that the community members in attendance felt like their community was not a priority of the County.



## **SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH**

The mission of the Environmental Health Section of the County Health Department is to safeguard life, promote human health and protect the environment through the practice of modern environmental health science, use of technology, rules and public education.

Besides Environmental Health, Registered Sanitarian duties, this section of the County Health Department is also the administrator for Solid Waste, Flood Plains and Subdivisions.

### **DEPARTMENTAL CONCERNS/ISSUES:**

The following is a summary of the discussions with the various Department Heads and Elected Officials and reflect their individual views.

- \* County Growth Policy, subdivisions are down
  - \* Regulations to blame
  - \* Updating
    - \* Waste water treatment
    - \* Flood plain maps and regulations
  - \* Solid waste
    - \* Refrigerator
  - \* Tribal contracts
    - \* Income to department
- \* Recycling centers
  - \* One at old sugar factory
  - \* Tire program
  - \* Paper and other recycling at IGA parking lot
- \* Budget
  - \* Cut a little
  - \* Not as easy to transfer between line items on budget

- \* Housing
  - \* Market slow down
  - Mortgage exemptions, seeing more of that
- \* Highway 47 flood plain, 2 projects
  - \* The bridge to past KOA camp ground and then onto part 2
- \* MDT to fix railroad crossing on Mitchell
  
- \* Most funds come from solid waste, inspections and general funds

## **ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH**

### **COMMUNITY CONCERNS/ISSUES**

The following is a summary of public comments from the public meetings held throughout the County and may not accurately reflect the law or the facts.

The community residents of Wyola and Lodge Grass suspect out- of- County people are dumping their garbage at the County's canister sites.

Other issues pertaining to the canister sites were fire and of course the paper and other garbage being blown around by the wind. The communities need to do better in keeping their communities clean. At one community the comment was, "it's an embarrassment to the community as a whole."

One solution to the out-of -County dumping and the amount of garbage 'flying around was that the sites need more routine monitoring.

Expressed was the cost increases for those entities who had previously contracted with the County for waste services and now were having to secure private contract for solid waste services. On that same note, concern was expressed about garbage being dumped anywhere and everywhere and that is going to be a real problem if a number of County garbage canister sites are closed.

A question arose on how solid waste is charged out for budgeting purposes.

## **WYOLA**

- \* Need to clean up Wyola
- \* Fire season
  - \* Canister site fires - especially at night
  - \* Out of County people dumping at canister
  - \* Garbage everywhere
  - \* No volunteer fire fighters
  - \* Would be nice to have at least a fire truck
  - \* Need to talk with Crow Legislature to have a community meeting

## **PRYOR**

- \* Garbage.
  - \* Move the dump.

## **DECKER**

- \* The cost of not being able to contract with the County for this service was a major concern for one of the attendees, stating an increase in the fee was a big hit to the budget.
- \* One suggestion came from another attendee that a solid waste business be contacted in Sheridan, WY, to possibly pick up solid waste from the Tongue River Reservoir.

## **LODGE GRASS**

- \* Need somebody to monitor the site, more routinely
  - \* No weekend coverage.
  - \* Additional responsibility by those involved.
- \* Out of County dumping (WY residents) at the Lodge Grass and Wyola sites.
- \* Would like to see government more involved and maintain community involvement.
- \* Hard to believe Wyola community can generate that much waste in a week.

- \* Community needs to do better, an embarrassment to the community as a whole.
- \* Still dumping at the old dump on the hill overlooking the rodeo/camp ground.

## **SAPRY AREA**

- \* Liked the recycling business in Hardin.
- \* General discussion about County problems, old trailer houses coming into the County
- \* Concerned about what is going to happen if the canisters are removed and the garbage dumping that will go on.

## **HARDIN**

- \* If all canisters go, is going to be a real problem.
  - \* Contracts with other business entities, schools, IHS, BIA, etc.
  - \* Budget of solid waste and how is it charged out.

## **SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT**

### **LAW ENFORCEMENT**

The County Sheriff's Department employs 18 deputies, 6 jailers and 6 dispatchers. There are 3 deputies on duty per 12 hour shift. Of the 18 deputies, 1 is stationed at Decker and another at Fort Smith. Deputies go through 14 weeks of FTO (field officer training) and police academy training for 12 weeks. Similarly, jailers have 4 weeks of FTO and academy training. The dispatchers have 4 weeks of FTO and 1 week of academy training.

Within the department some of the officers have special training such as firearms instruction, crisis intervention, are crash investigators, gang affiliation training and drug interdiction training and have ARIDE (Advanced Roadside Impaired Driving Enforcement) training.

The Sheriff's Department utilizes BullBerry mapping system, which provides GIS based mapping solutions, which provides responder routing for cell phone and land line based 9-1-1 calls. Routing uses GIS layers to enable routing on the fly regardless of responder location. This routing gives dispatchers, deputies, ambulance and fire a pinpoint location of an emergency call. The dispatcher can also use 'markers' (which basically are little pictures i.e. flame for fire) alerting emergency personnel of the basic nature of the call

### **DEPARTMENTAL CONCERNS/ISSUES:**

The following is a summary of the discussions with the various Department Heads and Elected Officials and reflect their individual views.

- \* New on the job
- \* Delivery of services, working to improve
  - \* Shorthanded, hiring a few
- \* Cross deputizing officers, to stop running to 'safe zones'
  - \* Crow, 9 officers
  - \* Cheyenne, 4
  - \* One at Decker
  - \* One at Fort Smith
  - \* Total of 18 (1 contracted to City of Hardin)
- \* Meth
  - \* Behind on, but main effort now
    - \* Fear of retaliation
    - \* Fear to call in
- \* Develop trust, walking business, talking to residents

- \* Jail
  - \* Cost for taxpayers
  - \* Feds will put in money also
  - \* Use of prison (detention center)
    - \* County cannot use the prison
      - \* State statue and liability insurance issues
  - \* \$83.00/day/prisoner. Cost includes medical
- \* Pay
  - \* Still on the low end, comparison for jailers and dispatch
  - \* Sheriff average work week of 60 hours, same pay
- \* Reserves
  - \* Nonpaid and none yet
- \* Wolf Mountain Search and Rescue
  - \* A few divers around

The following is a summary of comments after the Sheriff had been in office for approximately 5 months.

- \* Visibility
  - \* Working on being out in the County more, attending public and Town Hall meetings
- \* Having deputies spending more time in outlying communities getting to know the communities.
- \* Drugs
  - \* Working closely with BIA, has a good working relationship.
  - \* Responding as needed either routinely and/or helping with arrests, etc.
  - \* Sharing and gathering information
- \* Budget
  - \* Keeping a watchful eye on the line items of the budget
  - \* Deputy coverage sometimes an issue, 3 on duty per shift with 2 patrolling Hardin.
- \* Cell tower coverage
  - \* A problem in certain areas of the County
    - \* Becomes a safety issue for deputies
- \* Gang activity
  - \* Documenting gang insignias, colors, etc.
  - \* Working closely with School Resource Officer

- \* New Jail
  - \* Preliminary working on design
    - \* A two story pod-type construction with 100 bed, single cells
    - \* Day rooms, updated kitchen, laundry and medical rooms
    - \* Remodel current jail, move booking area, Sally port, enlarge dispatch area.

## **LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMUNITY CONCERNS/ISSUES**

The following is a summary of public comments from the public meetings held throughout the County and may not accurately reflect the law or the facts.

Law enforcement seemed to top the list of concerns. The lack of visible law enforcement and the drug problem in the communities was of greatest concern.

Concerns voiced included the need for more deputies, visible law enforcement out in the County to include the Sheriff, lack of funding and more training, law enforcement being spread too thin due to the size of the County and the number of officers needed to patrol 'Hardin', the officers not knowing the County (by area, residents, back roads, etc) and the never ending issue of 'cross-deputizing'. Furthermore, relations with State and Federal law enforcement agencies (to include BIA, etc) needs to be mended.

Some good ideas of solving some of the issues included:

- \* Increasing the visibility by driving through the various communities and out in the County on a more routine basis. In doing so officers could pinpoint where drug activity is happening, develop plans to include other law enforcement agencies for potential arrests and curbing/eliminating some of the drug activity within the communities in the area and should be coordinated with the penal system with the County.
- \* Cross-deputizing could be called something else (i.e. safety patrol) and would not have the attached stigma. A milder approach could be taken.
- \* At one such open public community meeting, a strategic plan for dealing with the drug and alcohol problem should be started and if one is in place implement it.

- \* Perhaps the alcohol tax dollars the County receives could be used more efficiently.
- \* The penal system should share in part of the responsibility of prosecuting drug related crimes. If the community drug dealers/users are identified and arrested, prosecute them.

The County Attorney should work with the BIA, Tribe and community residents from each of the communities around the County in developing a plan of action.

#### Jail issues

Over crowding

Funding

Cost per day per prisoner to house an inmate

Research, make sure it is built correctly if building a facility

It should be noted that in those communities with a resident deputy, Fort Smith and Decker, residents are seeing a decrease in drug activity, especially, and as a deterrent of drinking and the violence that goes along with that.

## FORT SMITH

#### Law enforcement.

- \* Very grateful for the presence of law 'finally' in the community.
  - \* Noticeable change in the community.
  - \* Do not pinch the County dollars so much that safety gets left out.
  - \* Do not want to lose law enforcement in the community.
  - \* Lots of drugs and alcohol in the community.
- \* **St. Xavier** area concern expressed by one attendee at the Fort Smith meeting.
  - \* Squatters on personal property.
  - \* Drug use, gun fire.
  - \* Law has been called but nothing is being done.

## WYOLA

#### Drugs and alcohol.

- \* Problems related to children being removed from homes by Crow Tribal Child Protective Services or State CPS.



## **PRYOR**

- \* Lack of law enforcement. This topic was echoed throughout the meeting.
- \*       Drugs are a real problem and nobody wants to do anything about it.
- \* Can't get any help from law enforcement.
- \* Length of time to respond for help needed.

## **DECKER**

### Law enforcement

- \* Was nice to have the presence of law around in the area.
- \* Noticeable deterrent of drinking/violence of patrons using Tongue reservoir.
- \* Deputy needs to stay.
- \* Community gets good ambulance service from Sheridan, WY.

## **LODGE GRASS**

### Law enforcement (this was basically the main topic from those in attendance)

- \* Too little spread to far
- \* Visibility of any law enforcement would be nice
- \* See the officers both County and BIA sit on the other side of the railroad tracks, but they do not come into town.
- \* Question how often does law patrol in Wyola and Lodge Grass.
- \* Patrol more in Lodge Grass area and out in the County in that area.
- \* Cross deputizing.
  - \* A problem of law officers not being able to enforce the law, either tribal or County.
  - \* Take a milder approach
    - \* Suggestion of not calling it 'cross deputizing' but something else (i.e. safety patrol)
  - \* Federal offense violation
  - \* Problem goes beyond 'safety'.
    - \* Patrolling - stop detain, call appropriate authority and take care of the crime.

- \* Bootleggers now back in Lodge Grass

#### Drugs and alcohol

- \* If the local residents know who the 'king pin' drug dealers are, the law should be able to do something.  
Lack of law has let the drug and alcohol problem flourish.
- \* Drug dealing is going on all over town, day and night.
  - \* If law enforcement would spend time in Lodge Grass they would be able to pinpoint where the major drug sales happen and would not rely upon community members for much information.
  - \* Fear of retaliation from drug dealers/users if they turn anyone into the law.
- \* Perhaps a strategic plan for dealing with the drug/alcohol problem should be started/implemented.
- \* Maybe the alcohol tax dollars the County receives could be used more efficiently.

#### Have County and community develop a community based plan for the future

- \* Maybe the Land Grant University might be able to help get us started.
- \* Penal system needs to be stiffer
- \* Additional costs to the County
- \* Have the County Attorney and community design a plan
- \* BIA and County cooperation.

## SARPY

#### Law enforcement

- \* Speeders going/coming from coal mine, especially around shift changes.
  - \* Problem has been addressed with mine personnel, has not helped but speeding tickets probably would.
  - \* Not stopping at the stop sign when coming from mine entering on Highway 384.
- \* Garbage on resident's driveways.
- \* Traffic due to increase as mine goes into downtime with well over 100 extra workers. Due to tentatively start around April 1<sup>st</sup>.
- \* Would like to make sure the County Sheriff's Department is notified.
- \* Wondering about number of County deputies.
- \* Feeling that patrolling in Hardin is taking away from County patrols.

- \* Wondering about County deputies taking County vehicles home.
- \* Wondering about the number of times they are actually called in off duty to work.
- \* Concern that more of the deputies need to know the Sarpy area for emergencies and fire, not just the Sheriff and Rick Kruger. (This concern was expressed in the other County communities - visibility.
- \* Livestock permits issued by Sheriff's Department.
- \* More internal training for new deputies.
- \* Is there a way to save left over budget dollars to the next fiscal year to build up a reserve to use in case of disasters and other unknown emergencies
- \* Prioritizing County revenues for more County Law Enforcement
- \* A game warden is needed.
- \* Keep the Sarpy area peaceful.

## **HARDIN**

### Law enforcement:

- \* Sheriff needs to be out in County more.
- \* Needs to be more visible.
- \* Jurisdiction issues, cross deputizing.
  - \* All parties need to sit down and work out the problem(s).
  - \* If ticketed, either goes into Tribal Court or District Court.
- \* Funding for more deputies.

### Jail issues - County Jail versus Two Rivers.

- \* Over crowded.
- \* Price per day per prisoner.
- \* Not enough research done to build to house state prisoners.
- \* Questioned MaCO and liability insurance requirements.

### Drug problems

- \* Relationship with County and State needs to be fixed.
  - \* DCI not coming into County like they used to.
  - \* Drugs tied to reservation, FBI gets involved.
  - \* County task force.
  - \* DFS case load doubling due to drug problem.

## **SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT ROAD DEPARTMENT, RURAL FIRE, JUNK VEHICLE**

When one thinks of the County Road Department that is not all that County Department does, besides maintaining the County road system, Rural Fire and Junk Vehicles make up the balance of this Department's duties. This Department has a Superintendent, a Road Foreman and 3 Fire Chiefs.

Briefly, the County road system, consists of over 1,000 miles of County maintained roads and 54 bridges maintained by a crew of 14 and 9 road graders. It should be further noted that 2 of the 14 crew are stationed in Lodge Grass and 1 in Decker, along with a road grader at each of those locations. Properly grading the County roads takes up to 8 passes, a bit of quick math, 1,000 miles x 8 passes = 8,000 miles.

Furthermore, 3 of the crew remains in Hardin, acting as first responders in case of fire and that if more firefighters are needed, such as in a large range fire, more of the crew is pulled to help fight those fires. Also the Road Department employees provide warm zone and HAZMAT duties within the County.

It should also be stated that approximately 300 miles of blacktop roads within the County, secondary Highways 313, 384, 463 and 314 that were once maintained by the County Road Department are now the responsibility of the State Highway Department.

Most of the issues expressed from around the County centered around needing more gravel, roads graded more often, school bus routes should be plowed first if not plowed by the State Highway Department, County road signs either needing more or replacing, guardrails and reflector posts and budget savings.

Better communication was also addressed and the bosses (Superintendent, Road Foreman and/or the three Fire Chief) should be seen out in the County more.

One solution was suggested by an attendee of having community meetings inviting the County Commissioners along with Superintendent, Road Foreman, Sheriff or Undersheriff, etc. working on potential ideas for solving some of the problems and developing better partnerships within the County's communities.

Rural Fire falls under the Superintendent's umbrella, this was of greatest concern expressed by those communities in the far outlying areas of the County, namely Pryor, Wyola, etc. they expressed a sense of dislike from County personnel, lack of trained personnel/volunteers and equipment and places to house fire equipment and the need for better communication and prioritizing of the outlying communities needs.

## **DEPARTMENTAL CONCERNS/ISSUES:**

The following is a summary of the discussions with the various Department Heads and Elected Officials and reflect their individual views.

- \* Tries to be proactive
- \* Micro management of Department Heads
- \* Safety issues of buildings, age, and condition
- \* Sanding materials, frozen, exposed to weather
- \* Other department's storage in their area
- \* His labor spent on his stuff
- \* Moving and doing things for other departments
- \* Mechanic working for other departments.
- \* Crew
  - \* Same crew 2 years in a row
  - \* Staff training for operators
  - \* Higher pay promised for trained employees
  - \* Low injury reports, prove their training
  - \* Salary improved
- \* Coal Board
- \* Fire suppression
  - \* DNRC, lots of monies go to western Montana
- \* Cross jurisdiction
  - \* Fires
  - \* Roads
- \* Tribe/BIA messing up County roads with blades, etc
- \* GIS mapping for County boundary

## **ROAD DEPARTMENT, RURAL FIRE, JUNK VEHICLE COMMUNITY CONCERNS/ISSUES**

The following is a summary of public comments from the public meetings held throughout the County and may not accurately reflect the law or the facts.

The importance of County personnel knowing the areas around the County (back roads, residents, etc) was also expressed not only for fire but also for other emergencies.

A suggestion from one community was, if possible, to use budget savings for Rural Fire budget as a way to build up reserves to be used in emergency cases

A positive note came from those in attendance from the Sarpy area, noting they are grateful for the rural fire building, having a DNRC fire truck available and the trained personnel.

## **LODGE GRASS**

### **Roads**

- \* Infrastructure
- \* Road safety both to and from school
- \* Prioritize time for completion of road construction to finish overlay.

## **DECKER**

Roads were one of the main topics:

- \* Gravel on Young's Creek.
- \* Need to take care of the Quietus Road more and done correctly.
- \* School bus routes plowed first during the winter.
  - \* The need for gravel/shale.
  - \* Explanation was given by the Road Foreman that the County is in the process of working with BLM and developing a gravel pit(s)
- \* Wagon Wheel Road should be graded at least a couple of times a year.
- \* Would like the County road personal to grade road(s) for emergencies (i.e. letter from doctor).
- \* When graveling, try not to use 'big rocks'
- \* Use of road mill, not a sound initial investment.
  
- \* Road signs, down and/or missing. Those in attendance well aware that the road signs are not a priority, but some of the times the traveling public gets lost with the signs being down.

Economic development as it pertains to County Road \_\_\_\_\_

- \* Tongue River Reservoir management is working on making the Park a Destination Park.
- \* Connecting Trails to Park program (i.e. bike trails connecting either park-to-park or trail or historical sites/developed within the park itself.

- \* Management has seen an increase in visitors to the park and is working on trying to incorporate more visitors to the area through the Destination Park program, incorporating Rosebud Battlefield through the Trails to Park program.
- \* Concerned about the condition of the County Road fronting the Park.

#### Communication

- \* Communication does seem to be a problem between the Decker community/area.
- \* They sometimes feel very isolated and forgot about.
- \* Would like for the County Commissioners to come to the area for a public meeting. One attendee offered to host such an event (Ray Stoltz, OW Ranch).
- \* Work on potential ideas for solving some of the problems and developing better partnerships.

## PRYOR

#### Roads

- \* Condition of the road from old Highway 87 to the lights (road coming from Billings area) and why it can't be fixed.
- \* The need for guardrails along the stretch of road from the lights into Pryor.
- \* Condition of the road in the winter and it not being plowed enough, especially from Highway 87 to Fritzler's 'T'. Other comments here included, 'why all of the road is not plowed in the winter'.

Fire. This area was probably the biggest concern those in attendance had.

- \* Structural fire suppression.
- \* The lack of response and the dislike perceived from the County's Fire Marshall and about the meeting with the County Commissioners, which produced an unsigned MOU, which they suspect is being blocked by Lance Pedersen, brought about the discussion that the County was not prioritizing the community's needs for basically all services: fire, law and ambulance.
- \* In the discussion the community leaders had with County Officials, they (community) was told that basically there were not any excess fire engines for Pryor. The community acknowledges the need to work government to government to solve some of these issues.
- \* Need for more communication.
- \* Signage, lack of.
- \* Entering Pryor
- \* Entering Big Horn County, Crow Reservation.

## WYOLA

### Fire season

- \* Canister site fires - especially at night
  - \* Out of County people dumping at canister
  - \* Garbage everywhere
- \* No volunteer fire fighters
  - \* Would be nice to have at least a fire truck
  - \* Need to talk with Crow Legislature to have a community meeting

## SARPY AREA

### Fire

- \* Residents in attendance grateful for the rural fire building, having a DNRC fire truck available and trained personnel - a good thing.
- \* Concern that more County personnel need to know the Sarpy area for emergencies and fire, not just the Sheriff and Rick Kruger and who lives where.
- \* Is there a way to save left over budget dollars to the next fiscal year to build up a reserve to use in case of disasters and other unknown emergencies

### Roads

- \* Concern that more County personnel need to know the Sarpy area for emergencies and fire, and who lives where, not just the Sheriff and Rick Kruger.
- \* Would like to see guardrails on the Basin Road.
- \* Signage on County/Reservation lines, especially designated on the County roads and Highway 384.
- \* County roads are in better shape than they have been in the past.
- \* Is there a way to save left over budget dollars to the next fiscal year to build up a reserve to use in case of disasters and other unknown emergencies.

State Highway 384 (Jeff Anderson, MDOT, Hardin station will be notified of concerns expressed that pertain to Highway 384)

- \* Would like to have reflectors alongside of highway
- \* More reflectors at the junction of Highway 87 and Highway 384 (down by the underpass)
- \* Need guardrails on the highway, especially on Dry Creek and Iron Springs



- \* Wondering if there is a way to get the road plowed more in the winter, especially with the coal trucks on the highway and the bus routes in the area.
- \* Wondering about Warren Trucking sanding the highway ahead of the State plowing the road.
- \* The sand used has bigger pebbles in it and wondering about size requirements of the sand.
- \* Signage on County/Reservation lines, especially designated on the County roads and Highway 384.

**The Departments listed below, the public had no issues with or commented on during the Study Commissions public meetings throughout the County.**

## **ACCOUNTING DEPARTMENT**

### **DEPARTMENTAL CONCERNS/ISSUES:**

The following is a summary of the discussions with the various Department Heads and Elected Officials and reflect their individual views.

The chief concerns raised by the department consisted of:

- \* No policies and procedures and control for accounting.
- \* Accounts payable, we are paying for things we should not have, such as inmate medical services is a big issue.
  - \* The payment is being forced.
  - \* Question if commissioners look over invoices
  - \* Management overrides control and bias.
    - \* Provide proof, regulated by the department head.
    - \* Auditors will be looking at that next year.
- \* Consider City/County government, that question will need to be addressed
- \* Few people (employees) can read the budget report(s).
- \* County has enough money to operate, just not enough tax money, County relying on it's share of the royalties.
- \* General fund, 30 mills
- \* Salaries are biggest cost for county
  - \* 144 employees total
  - \* 124 F/T
  - \* Under funded to support the staff
- \* Law enforcement, 30 mills
  - \* City does not pay enough
    - \* New Sheriff is trying to control his funds much better
- \* Coal Gross Proceeds
  - \* If that goes down it will really hurt.
  - \* Not making decision to prepare for loss of Coal Gross Proceeds
  - \* We get a percentage that relies on royalties

- \* A lot goes to the Sheriff Department
- When asked about other government form possibilities:
- \* A professional manager
    - \* Because of pay would get someone new & fresh
    - \* Salary, \$60,000 to \$80,000 per year and they may move on in 5 years.
  - \* The current Commissioner's executive secretary has no formal training or degree.
    - \* Sometimes big bills are not being relayed to commissioners, just to the executive secretary who directs the accounting department to pay before the Commissioner's okay to pay.
  - \* Audit findings about separation of duties.

## **CLERK and RECORDER**

### **DEPARTMENTAL CONCERNS/ISSUES:**

The following is a summary of the discussions with the various Department Heads and Elected Officials and reflect their individual views.

- \* This office could also use a standby person just to answer phones, take calls but not handle any day-to-day work in the office.
- \* Everything else seems to going okay.

Perhaps the AARP program if still active in Hardin might be an option for the 'stand-by person'.

## COUNCIL ON AGING

On July 25, 1969, the Big Horn Association of Senior Citizens, of Hardin, Montana established the Senior Citizens program, now known as the Big Horn County Council on Aging (COA). The COA policies and assurances are under provisions of Section 1321.161 (c) (2) of Title III Federal Regulations. The Federal Older Americans' Act Section 306 (a) (2) (c). The State Area II Agency on Aging, Social and Rehabilitation Service, Community Service Division.

In July, 1974, the Big Horn County Council on Aging incorporated as a non-profit Montana organization under the laws of the State of Montana.

This program was established as a tool for the promotion, and that priority should be geared to our most important resources: The Senior Citizens, People and Community.

This department is funded by Big Horn County, State of Montana, Federal Government, project income and in-kind contributions.

The Senior program's functions are established to:

- \* Promote and develop programs and activities that benefit Senior Citizens.
- \* Cooperate with the Montana State Unit on Aging, and Area II Agency on Aging, also public and private agencies of the Community, State and National level, to more efficiently meet the needs and provide opportunities for older persons;
- \* Participate in referral services in areas of Health, Housing, Finances and Transportation;
- \* Bring people together for socialization;
- \* Be aware and interested in the aspects, and needs of the Aging, promote appropriate public relations and endeavors, and coordinate activities, and fiscal management; and
- \* Seek out resources at the local, State, and National levels, to provide services for the Aging.

The Council on Aging also acts as a liaison organization for any agency interested in the positive effects for elderly people. The main purpose is to promote the development of a comprehensive and coordinated service system to meet the needs of the older persons.

With this approach, the COA hopes to achieve involvement; plan services and coordinate planning with other agencies and organizations which promote opportunities to the elderly, on a wider range in both the public and private sectors.

The result will be to promote a better future outlook with new and expanded benefits and opportunities for Senior Citizens that will enhance and fulfill their lives to the maximum.

The Senior Centers provides 425 congregate and 183 home delivered meals a month in Hardin and 176 congregate and 43 home delivered meals a month in LG

Additional services include daily transportation in Hardin, legal/tax aide referral, health care/screening, pedicures, center activities/recreation and low impact exercise.

## **COUNCIL ON AGING**

### **DEPARTMENTAL CONCERNS/ISSUES:**

The following is a summary of the discussions with the various Department Heads and Elected Officials and reflect their individual views.

There are 2 County Senior Centers, Hardin at Little Big Horn Center and the other located in Lodge Grass at 119 Harding Avenue.

When asked if this department's needs are being met, the needs for the Lodge Grass Center are not being met and still have issues with:

- \* Request for awning for north parking lot for 2 years at Lodge Grass because of snow and ice and is still needed.
- \* Brought up at COA board meetings
- \* Needs to have ceiling lowered to save on power (Lodge Grass).

The new building in Hardin is doing well. The cost of meals has risen, but still a bargain at \$4.50.

The senior bus has presented problems for this department and is need of:

- \* A bus policy and procedure handbook
- \* ADA compliant.
- \* Need attendant
  - \* Cost of the Attendant
  - \* AARP volunteer

## DISTRICT COURT

### DEPARTMENTAL CONCERNS/ISSUES:

The following is a summary of the discussions with the various Department Heads and Elected Officials and reflect their individual views.

- \* Has a good reliable staff. Office runs smooth.
- \* Would like to have a standby person, like revolving person that could be called on when situations arise, such as illness, current staff all in training, etc.
  - \* This person could answer phones, take messages, etc. but not handle any day-to-day work in the office.
- \* Would like to see the Courtroom updated, flooring, etc.

## EXTENSION OFFICE

As Montana's land-grant university, MSU is the administrative heart of Montana's Extension Service , hosting a network of specialists who do research and provide up-to-date information. But it is the agents stationed throughout the state's counties, Indian reservations and tribal colleges who provide the day-to-day contact with the people the 1914 Smith-Lever Act was designed to assist, and that is exactly what the U.S. Congress had in mind 100 years ago when it established the partnership between agricultural colleges, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and county and state governments known as the Cooperative Extension Service. MSU Extension improves the lives of Montana citizens by providing unbiased research-based education and information that integrates learning, discovery and engagement to strengthen the social, economic and environmental well-being of individuals, families, and communities.

Today's Extension Service is nothing like in the beginning offering a wide variety of information on topics such as food and nutrition, housing and environmental health, family and human development, gardening and landscaping, water quality range, livestock and sustainable Ag, farm and ranch management, integrated pest management, wildfire, forestry, fire services training, community development and probably the most known service of all, 4-H.

As of writing of this document Big Horn County 4-H program consists of five 4-H clubs, 123 4-H members and 47 4-H leaders. Another MSU Extension youth based program in the County is SNAP-Ed (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Education). This program provides hands-on nutrition education where participants learn about healthy eating and being active. The school year of 2015-2016 the County's SNAP-Ed program targeted 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders in 8 of the schools throughout the County . This hands-on program reached 957 children during the school year.

## **DEPARTMENTAL CONCERNS/ISSUES:**

The following is a summary of the discussions with the various Department Heads and Elected Officials and reflect their individual views.

The staff pretty much have free rein to do their jobs. This office has been fairly frugal with the budget and no trouble with getting their budget. Commissioners are open whenever staff needs to see them.

An ongoing concern was raised in regards to the use of the county vehicle and the transportation of youth to/from events and Extension Office knows it's a liability insurance issue.

- \* Extension Office and 4-H Council is investigating the possibility of getting a bus to meet 4-H Council's transportation issues
- \* Going to check into the old Senior bus that was on the County's surplus sale.

The County Commissioners and Big Horn County Fairboard have been very generous with the new facilities for the fairgrounds.

- \* There needs to be a larger meeting room/rooms at the fairgrounds to accommodate multiple events concurrently.

Concerns and problems with Extension Office handling the taking of reservations for the fairgrounds.

- \* Stated the Extension Office has been directed by Commissioners to continue with reservation handling for the fairgrounds.
- \* If there is a problem in reserving the fairgrounds then the Extension staff is caught in the middle between client and fair board.

- \* Suggested that at least a part-time manager be hired to handle this aspect and that way that person can also try to bring in more events, etc. to the fairgrounds.
- \* Acknowledges funding is probably going to be a problem.\* Poorly laid out kitchen.
- \* Needing to watch out by the beam so you don't bang your head.
- \* Kitchen now meets sanitation rules.
  - \* Has more electrical outlets, counter space, has the necessary sinks for food prep and hand washing.
- \* If a manager could be hired events such as horse shows, car rallies, and evening shows could be a possible way to draw more people.

On County's web page the fairgrounds is listed on the Extension link/page.

Ag issues, grasshoppers, spray programs, would like to work with Commissioners in setting up cost share programs, like the weed program.

## **Human Resources**

### **DEPARTMENTAL CONCERNS/ISSUES:**

The following is a summary of the discussions with the various Department Heads and Elected Officials and reflect their individual views.

Being fairly new to this department, the manager did not think there was a lot of opportunity to bring things before the Commissioners. this department is responsible for the County's handbook and this is being revised and worked upon, so that everyone will get a handbook and one each per law enforcement and road department, per union agreement.

When asked about salaries and turn over, this seems to be an issue and competing with other employers for the eligible workforce.



Big Horn County is current one of 26 State counties that make up the MaCO Trust. The County benefits only went up 0.6% in 2014-2015, where as the State employees' benefits went up 30%. The County holds a wellness fair every year.

An easier way of explaining the benefits package to the County employees would be with three different benefit handbooks, one for each of the two unions and one for the regular County employees.

## **LIBRARY**

The corner stone for the County Library was laid by the Masonic Fraternity on May 12, 1918.

In addition to housing approximately 33,000 books the Library provides the following services: InterLibrary Loans, E-books, audio books, DVD's, children programming, an updated teen area, public access computers for children and adults, a meeting room, providing scanning, wireless printing, photocopying, laminating, photo printing, business cards and they even can clean your DVD or video games.

The Library collaborates with a number of other departments and organizations, such as the quilters guild, VISTA for job application help and with SNAP-Ed working with Adult Ed teaching adult cooking classes.

Educational Opportunity Center/TRiO is a federally funded program providing services to the Big Horn County area in partnership with the Adult Education program/Big Horn County Library. EOC services are open to anyone 16 years and older.

The Big Horn County Library offers a PreSchool Storytime year round for 0-5 year olds. Programs are Wednesday mornings at 10:30. At Storytime we read a story together then do an activity tied in with the theme for the week.

In the summer we offer programs for PreSchool through 6<sup>th</sup> grades. For 8 weeks every summer we encourage kids to come to the Library for a safe gathering of friends and classmates to read together and use their imagination during craft time.

The Big Horn Room is a compilation of history from around our county. The collection includes books about the Little Bighorn Battle, General Custer, Crow History, and Cheyenne History.

The Hardin Adult Basic Education (ABE) Program is located in the basement of the Big Horn County Library. It is sponsored by the Montana Office of Public Instruction, the Hardin School District, and the Big Horn County Library. The purpose of the Hardin ABE Program is to provide the tutoring and testing necessary for Big Horn County residents to receive their Montana issued high school equivalency certificate, HiSET – High School Equivalency Test (formerly known as a GED).

## **DEPARTMENTAL CONCERNS/ISSUES:**

The following is a summary of the discussions with the various Department Heads and Elected Officials and reflect their individual views.

The library is using social media of Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest as ways to access our County Library along with a link from the County's new website. The new computer system, phones and email addresses did cause patron concern.

Accessing literature in various forms, books, internet, DVD, Montana Library To Go, recorded books and local stories, all can be found at the library.

Of concern was that the old section of the library building is separating from the building new section.

Staffing, only three staff plus one HRDC worker. The library board is fully staffed and currently the Friends of the Library only has 5 members.

New chairs were purchased to encourage teens to use library and can be found upstairs in the library. In other exciting news Billings Community Center will be featuring Big Horn County through a grant received.

## **PUBLIC HEALTH**

Public Health is different from other health care, because it focuses on the community as a whole. The vision of public health is to equip the people with up-to-date information and proven resources, emphasizing prevention and common sense. The key to good health lies within the community itself, in the concern and appreciation we have for each other. This is the heart of the Big Horn County Public Health Department.

Big Horn County Public Health provides many services to the residents of the County and below is a small sampling of the services provided.

Big Horn County offers free vaccinations for children up to age 19. Vaccinations aren't just for kids and offers tetanus shots, hepatitis A and B shots, flu shots, pneumonia shots and more ... for adults too. Tuberculosis testing is available at the County Health Department.

Free pregnancy testing is available at the Public Health Office.

Best Beginnings is a dedicated group of over 30 community members who have come together to make sure that all of our children have a good start in life. The coalition is made up of parents, people from the community, and service providers who work with families every day. The goal of this partnership is to improve family support systems and learning opportunities for all children in Big Horn County. We hope to empower parents and caregivers by giving family service providers the tools they need to best support our youngest citizens. Best Beginnings Parents as Teachers is a no-cost program for families who live in Big Horn County with young children up to the age of 3 and also includes pregnant women . Enrolled families work with their own certified Parents as Teachers to help them learn more about their child's development at different ages. Families get personal visits in their homes twice a month. During each visit, there are fun learning activities for children and parents to do together. Each visit focuses on supporting an area of child development and on family well-being. Program services include personal home visits, learning activities promoting child development, family goal setting, screening development assessments and health reviews including vision and hearing screenings. Families are connected to community resources and there is group connection through monthly group meetings.

Big Horn County Public Health offers a car seat program for families with children ages 6 and under. These car seats are available while supplies last, at various times throughout the year. The child will be weighed in order to assure the proper type of seat. A certified installer will then set up the seat in the parents' car, instructing the parents on proper installment procedures.

WIC is a nutrition education program offering food supplements for low-income pregnant and/or breastfeeding women, their infants and children up to the age of 5 years who have medical or nutritional risk factors. WIC also screens children for dietary concerns, iron deficiency and growth patterns. Services are available to all Montana residents who are pregnant, postpartum up to six months or breastfeeding. We also serve infants or children under age five who have a nutritional need and whose families meet certain income criteria. WIC services in Big Horn County include the following: Nutrition counseling, breastfeeding support and breast pumps, electric and manual.

This Department is utilizing social media - Likes us, on their page at “Big Horn County Public Health Department”.

In response to events that occurred on September 11, 2001, the United States Congress provided funding to strengthen public health systems in every state. The Big Horn County Public Health Department, under the guidance of the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services, is proud to be a part of Emergency Preparedness for our local community. The primary goal of these activities is to be ready for health-related emergencies or threats. These could include such things as wildfires or winter storms, as well as chemical spills or bioterrorism.

The Big Horn County Public Health staff has been instrumental in reorganizing the LEPC (Local Emergency Planning Committee) for our area. The LEPC is a coalition of agencies and individuals representing many facets of emergency services, including law enforcement, fire departments, EMS, hospitals, clinics and more. Already the cooperative efforts of LEPC have led to upgrades in communications systems, emergency equipment, and training opportunities for these groups. Networking between tribal and county governments in regards to emergency preparedness has been strengthened significantly, building a united front for the protection of the communities across Big Horn County.

The Public Health Department’s specific roles in Emergency Preparedness involve the following:

To establish and maintain effective disease surveillance, epidemiology and reporting, to support improvements in our local hospitals’ security, emergency planning and laboratory capacities, to develop strong networking and interagency relations, via upgraded communications technology and increased participation with other groups, with a goal of providing a solid infrastructure for use in the event of an emergency, to endorse and achieve core competencies among our own staff, which have been identified as essential to Public Health emergency preparedness, to educate the public regarding health / risk issues and emergencies – through effective and familiar channels – to the degree that they will know what to do and where to turn for help if a community emergency occurs and contribute to the development of the Big Horn County Emergency Plan.

This department also declares when the County is under a Rabies quarantine.

Environmental Health Services is a division of the Big Horn County Public Health Department. It's purpose is to protect the public's health and safety through the delivery of effective environmental health consultation, education, inspection, enforcement, and monitoring. See Environmental Health section for more information.

#### **DEPARTMENTAL CONCERNS/ISSUES:**

The following is a summary of the discussions with the various Department Heads and Elected Officials and reflect their individual views.

- \* Contracts with Hospital since 1996 (\$78,000/year)
- \* Programs:
  - \* WIC, Public Health Emergency Preparedness, Beast Beginnings, Maternal Child Health (grant 3 years).
  - \* 2.5 FTE public health nurses in the early years.
    - \* Now 0.60 FTE, 20 to 30 hours
    - \* Need 1 more public health nurse needed for home visits, nutritional teaching
- \* Have to beg for cost of living adjustment each year
  - \* Hospital is subsidizing Public Health, \$25,000 per year the last 3 years
- \* No registered dietician now
- \* Government: Manager, commission, commission/manager
  - \* Charter ?
  - \* Manager maybe more astute
- \* Government study
  - \* Law enforcement deconsolidation failed
- \* Commissioners have been good to hospital
  - \* Equipment
  - \* Sponsor Coal Board grants.

## **SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS**

### **DEPARTMENTAL CONCERNS/ISSUES:**

The following is a summary of the discussions with the various Department Heads and Elected Officials and reflect their individual views.

Concerns of money passing through the County and being improperly used by the County before it is dispersed to the entity it belongs and are funds in the proper account so they cannot be mixed with County funds was raised.

Another issue is that when elected official and/or department heads my be gone and nobody knows where they are or when they will be back. There is a lack of communication.